

A LETTER FROM HOME



THE MERIDIAN STAR

HOMES

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That sweet sound

Jarrold Moulds is a sophomore at Lamar School in Meridian. His parents are Bent and Karen Moulds, and he has a sister, Katie. The family attends First Presbyterian Church.

This is Jarrold's first year at Lamar. He is considering a career in the medical field, and his interests include golfing, hunting, fishing, soccer and "hanging with my boys."

Jarrold says he's not a cable news addict, but reports on the U.S. War on Terror are everywhere you look: "I've been seeing the news, and I've read about it, and it just kind of sparked something in me."



Moulds

When he writes, he said, he writes for the fun of it.

"I don't really see writing as a job; I see it as an activity or a hobby, something I like to do," he said.

"And, when I write, I always think about love poems and love messages. I don't know why. I just kind of relate to that."

So do we all.

Here is a scenario from Jarrold Moulds' mind — as he thinks about U.S. servicemen serving in the Middle East, tired, anxious and far from home.

By Jarrold Moulds

special to The Star

The thought of protecting a loved one is reassuring. The thought of a loved one going overseas to do so is scary but, every once in a while, a person who is called to duty leaves a special person behind in order to fulfill his duty.

The sound of her voice as he departs is breath-taking. He knows it will be a long time before he hears it again — and that this time may even be the last.

The thought of seeing her when he comes back is all that keeps him going. That special love between two people is indescribable and the time spent apart is all worth it when he returns.

He is off to war and is fighting for his country's protection. He is not only fighting for himself, but for millions of other people he doesn't even know.

The thought of her goes through his mind every time he breathes. He can't go two seconds without thinking about her. He knows that when he gets back, his girl will be waiting for him.

Two, three, four months pass by and the thought of being without her is unbearable. He has almost given up hope when mail call rings out. He reads her sweet writing and is weak at the knees.

He only received one letter, but reads it until it is worn from reading. He writes back but isn't sure if she receives his letter or not. The war is heated now and he can't write very often, nor does he receive any mail.

He is homesick and needs a break, just a small glimmer of home would satisfy his needs. He barely makes it through the days; hunger, no sleep and exhaustion all hinder his decision-making and thought process.

When he thinks he is about to give up, he thinks of her. Just the sight of her makes him melt. He knows when he gets back home, that sweet sound of her voice will be well worth the wait.

A few more months pass and, just like before, he becomes homesick and heartbroken. He needs so badly just to see or hear something from home.

When he thinks it will never get



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY PAULA MERRITT / THE MERIDIAN STAR

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In this recreation of a scene from Jarrold Moulds' story, Senior Airman Quinton Sellers of the Mississippi Air National Guard's 238th Air Support Operations Squadron in Meridian reads a letter from an imaginary sweetheart. Jarrold says e-mail is fast, almost instantaneous, but there's something special about an actual letter: "A letter gives a person something to hang on to."

U.S. Navy: At home in Meridian since 1961

By Steve Gillespie

staff writer

Naval Auxiliary Air Station Meridian was commissioned on July 14, 1961, as a \$60 million base.

Training Squadron 7 (VT-7) and Training Squadron 9 (VT-9) have been in operation at the base since that year. By July 1968, the base became a full Naval air station, which brought continued development.

In August 1971, Training Air Wing 1 (TW-1) was commissioned. It was the first training air wing to incorporate the single-site training concept. Until that time, jet aviation students received only the basic flight syllabus at NAS Meridian

before transferring to Texas for advanced flight training.

In April 1973, President Richard Nixon, accompanied by U.S. Sen. John C. Stennis, attended the dedication of the new Naval Technical Training Center, known locally as the Stennis Center. It was officially commissioned in April 1974.

Marine Aviation Training Support Squadron 1 was commissioned in April 1979 at the Naval Technical Training Center. Enlisted Marines receive entry-level training in one of four military occupational specialties at the center.

See NAS

Page 12



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VT-7 EAGLES

Maj. Stan Hester, an instructor for Training Squadron 7 at Naval Air Station Meridian, returns from a training flight. The VT-7 Eagles have trained at the base since it opened in 1961.

INSIDE THIS SECTION

Look for other stories about Naval Air Station Meridian throughout this special edition. In the "Homes" section:

• Moonlighting in the War on Terror. **Page 5**

• Making it through the "Red Zone." **Page 6**

• A complete list of contributors to the "Homes" section. **Page 2**